

Worksession

Agenda Item #	8
Meeting Date	October 29, 2007
Prepared By	Barbara B. Matthews City Manager
Approved By	

Discussion Item	City Manager's Quarterly Update
Background	<p>The City Manager has historically provided the City Council with periodic financial reports during the fiscal year, as well as a review of City programs and activities.</p> <p>As part of the City Manager's quarterly update, the City Manager provides a status report on the implementation plans for the Council priority areas for the years 2006 and 2007. Agreed upon by the Council in March 2006, these policy areas are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable housing • Community Center • Development in various areas of the City • Redevelopment of the New Hampshire Avenue corridor • Tax duplication
Policy	<p>The City Council is the policymaking making body for the City of Takoma Park and establishes work priorities for the staff.</p> <p>The City Manager provides the City Council with updates on the City's financial condition and staff activities to assist the City Council in the performance of its duties.</p>
Fiscal Impact	None
Attachments	<p>General Fund Financial Report for the First Quarter of FY08</p> <p>Quarterly Report of Activities and Programs</p> <p>Quarterly Report on Activities Related to Council Priorities</p>
Recommendation	For Discussion Only
Special Consideration	

CITY OF TAKOMA PARK
GENERAL FUND
FINANCIAL REPORT
FOR THE THREE MONTHS
ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2007

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The General Fund supports the day-to-day activities of the City, such as police protection, street and park maintenance, and general administrative functions. The General Fund's activities are supported primarily from two sources: taxes and utility fees and intergovernmental revenues.

Certain General Fund revenues are cyclical in nature. For example, property tax receipts and tax duplication payments are received during a certain period of time during the year. Other revenue sources are received on a monthly basis and, as a result, are more evenly distributed throughout the fiscal year.

The largest single source of revenue for the City's general operations is real property taxes. Total collections as of September 30, 2007 totaled \$679,904, an increase of \$259,243 from the prior year. The variance is likely attributable to the projected increase in revenues of ten percent from the prior year.

Timing differences account for the variance in several other major revenue sources. For example, highway user revenues were received shortly after the end of the quarter and posted during the month of October.

Receipts from income taxes as of September 30, 2007 totaled \$107,482, an increase of approximately \$28,000 from the prior year. The reason for the variance is undetermined but may be related to the projected increase in revenues from the prior year.

Revenues from recreation programs and services decreased by \$21,632 compared to the same period in the prior year. The variance is attributable to a larger amount of the fees for the summer camps being collected prior to July 1, 2007.

Revenues from licenses and permits decreased from \$63,409 in the prior year to \$24,977 in the current fiscal year. One factor contributing to the decrease of \$38,432 was the receipt of two \$18,000 annual payments related to the Takoma Junction parking lot lease in FY07. Additionally, approximately \$19,000 in telecommunication license fees—which historically are received early in the first quarter of the fiscal year—were received at the end of FY07.

Like General Fund revenues, not all fund expenditures occur evenly throughout the fiscal year. For example, contributions to the City's two pension plans are made in December. This can result in "peaks" in expenditures at certain times during the fiscal year.

General Fund expenditures as of the close of the first quarter totaled \$3,590,352 compared to \$3,287,780 in fiscal year 2007. The majority of the variance is attributable to expenditures classified as non-departmental.

Non-departmental expenditures as of September 30, 2007 totaled \$424,288 compared to \$146,197 in the prior year. The variance of \$278,091 is primarily attributable to the reclassification of workers' compensation in the FY08 budget from the departmental fringe benefit accounts to non-departmental. Workers' compensation in the amount of \$231,430 was paid during the quarter. The balance of the variance in non-departmental was due to higher insurance costs in the current fiscal year.

**GENERAL FUND REVENUES
FOR THE THREE MONTHS ENDED
SEPTEMBER 30, 2007**

REVENUES BY SOURCE:	Budgeted FY 2008	Actual To Date	Uncollected Revenue	% Collected	Prior Year Actual To Date	Change from Prior Year
Taxes and Utility Fees						
Real Property	8,864,019	679,904	8,184,115	7.67%	420,661	259,243
Personal Property	341,600	42,677	298,923	12.49%	629	42,048
RR and Public Utilities	169,444	0	169,444	0.00%	0	0
Penalties and Interest	25,000	7,873	17,127	31.49%	8,034	(161)
Admission and Amusement	300	11	289	3.67%	0	11
Additions and Abatements	0	(2,221)	2,221	n/a	(1,416)	(805)
Highway	616,382	18,805	597,577	3.05%	20,101	(1,296)
Income Tax	2,080,000	107,482	1,972,518	5.17%	79,150	28,332
Total--Taxes and Utility Fees	12,096,745	854,531	11,242,214	7.06%	527,159	327,372
Licenses and Permits	57,654	24,977	32,677	43.32%	63,409	(38,432)
Fines and Forfeitures	176,000	36,670	139,330	20.84%	53,702	(17,032)
Use of Money and Property	200,000	107,669	92,331	53.83%	61,029	46,640
Charges for Services						
Inspection Fees	288,000	688	287,312	0.24%	1,848	(1,160)
Public Parking Facilities	30,000	5,769	24,231	19.23%	5,307	462
Waste Collection & Disposal Charges	65,000	(345)	65,345	-0.53%	383	(728)
Recreation Programs and Services	245,500	62,580	182,920	25.49%	84,212	(21,632)
Library Fines and Fees	14,000	4,745	9,255	33.89%	3,023	1,722
Passport Services	30,000	7,950	22,050	26.50%	6,882	1,068
WSSC	130,000	0	130,000	0.00%	0	0
Copying	1,400	107	1,293	7.64%	1,062	(955)
Advertising--Bus Shelters	10,000	0	10,000	0.00%	5,473	(5,473)
Farmer's Market	4,680	0	4,680	0.00%	0	0
Telephone Commissions	300	0	300	0.00%	0	0
Recyclable Sales	2,000	1,925	75	96.25%	3,282	(1,357)
Mulch Sales	8,000	4,715	3,285	58.94%	3,635	1,080
Special Trash Pickup	8,000	2,415	5,585	30.19%	2,690	(275)
Parking Lot Lease County - County	12,000	0	12,000	0.00%	0	0
Total--Charges for Services	848,880	90,549	758,331	10.67%	117,797	(27,248)
Intergovernmental Revenues						
Police Protection (State)	400,000	100,263	299,737	25.07%	103,157	(2,894)
Bank Share Tax	5,643	0	5,643	0.00%	0	0
Library Aid	119,160	0	119,160	0.00%	0	0
Police Rebate	630,310	0	630,310	0.00%	0	0
In Lieu of Police	2,322,023	2,322,023	0	100.00%	2,322,023	0
In Lieu of Roads Maintenance	442,624	442,624	0	100.00%	442,624	0
In Lieu of Parks Maintenance	72,229	72,229	0	100.00%	72,229	0
In Lieu of Crossing Guard	163,193	163,193	0	100.00%	163,193	0
Takoma/Langley Rec. Agreement	125,000	0	125,000	0.00%	0	0
Hotel Motel Tax	85,000	7,259	77,741	8.54%	8,170	(911)
Cable Franchise Fees	157,000	0	157,000	0.00%	521	(521)
Cable--Operating	64,583	0	64,583	0.00%	0	0
Total--Intergovernmental Revenues	4,586,765	3,107,591	1,479,174	67.75%	3,111,917	(4,326)
Miscellaneous						
Tree Fund	0	0	0	n/a	0	0
Other	25,000	8,612	16,388	34.45%	5,377	3,235
Insurance Claims	2,000	5,498	(3,498)	274.90%	3,023	2,475
Takoma Langley Crossroads	0	0	0	n/a	0	0
Day Laborer Site	70,000	0	70,000	0.00%	0	0
Takoma Foundation Grant	0	0	0	n/a	0	0
Administrative Fees--Parking	7,000	870	6,130	12.43%	420	450
Donations	1,000	0	1,000	0.00%	20	(20)
Total--Miscellaneous	105,000	14,980	90,020	14.27%	8,840	6,140
Total Operating Revenues	18,071,044	4,236,967	13,834,077	23.45%	3,943,853	293,114
Sale of City Property	0	700	(700)	n/a	6,450	(5,750)
Total Revenues	18,071,044	4,237,667	13,833,377	23.45%	3,950,303	287,364

**GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES
FOR THE THREE MONTHS ENDED
SEPTEMBER 30, 2007**

DEPARTMENT:	Budgeted FY 2008	Expenditures To Date	Available Balance	% Unexpended	Prior Year Actual To Date	Change from Prior Year
<u>General Government</u>						
Legislative	100,100	15,388	84,712	84.63%	19,161	(3,773)
General Management	896,213	200,857	695,356	77.59%	177,441	23,416
Finance	447,566	98,207	349,359	78.06%	115,472	(17,265)
Legal	172,150	18,214	153,936	89.42%	16,983	1,231
Information Systems	286,494	90,765	195,729	68.32%	73,279	17,486
Human Resources	160,376	23,915	136,461	85.09%	22,697	1,218
City Clerk	194,513	33,955	160,558	82.54%	26,052	7,903
Total--General Government	2,257,412	481,301	1,776,111	78.68%	451,085	30,216
<u>Public Safety</u>						
Office of the Chief	505,346	83,118	422,228	83.55%	77,976	5,142
Communications	407,785	78,007	329,778	80.87%	62,228	15,779
Operations	3,027,720	580,083	2,447,637	80.84%	572,752	7,331
Support Services	821,092	116,345	704,747	85.83%	99,875	16,470
Administrative Services	657,441	114,128	543,313	82.64%	133,026	(18,898)
Total--Public Safety	5,419,384	971,681	4,447,703	82.07%	945,857	25,824
<u>Public Works</u>						
Administration	269,580	60,138	209,442	77.69%	60,906	(768)
Building Maintenance	719,948	171,876	548,072	76.13%	149,777	22,099
Equipment Maintenance	548,821	148,370	400,451	72.97%	116,806	31,564
Right-of-Way	867,462	133,928	733,534	84.56%	154,502	(20,574)
Solid Waste Management	746,776	130,161	616,615	82.57%	155,416	(25,255)
Gardens	171,005	36,209	134,796	78.83%	29,654	6,555
Urban Forest	234,890	27,146	207,744	88.44%	63,784	(36,638)
City Engineer	161,368	29,604	131,764	81.65%	31,828	(2,224)
Total--Public Works	3,719,850	737,432	2,982,418	80.18%	762,673	(25,241)
<u>Recreation</u>						
Administration	242,840	38,802	204,038	84.02%	81,323	(42,521)
Outreach	0	0	0	n/a	3,029	(3,029)
TP Recreation Center	227,446	28,804	198,642	87.34%	38,022	(9,218)
Community Programs	114,813	23,936	90,877	79.15%	18,345	5,591
Athletic Fields/Facilities	73,894	8,825	65,069	88.06%	1,435	7,390
Camps	103,356	40,494	62,862	60.82%	32,168	8,326
Before/After School Programs	98,415	10,555	87,860	89.28%	3,865	6,690
Community Center	415,693	60,305	355,388	85.49%	28,174	32,131
Total--Recreation	1,276,457	211,721	1,064,736	83.41%	206,361	5,360
<u>Housing & Comm. Dev.</u>						
Administration	120,678	21,044	99,634	82.56%	23,524	(2,480)
Code Enforcement	376,894	77,399	299,495	79.46%	79,220	(1,821)
Landlord-Tenant	125,404	24,196	101,208	80.71%	24,084	112
COLTA	122,818	18,824	103,994	84.67%	16,019	2,805
Community Development	635,232	63,693	571,539	89.97%	53,802	9,891
Affordable Housing	137,808	20,049	117,759	85.45%	20,009	40
Total--Housing & Comm. Dev.	1,518,834	225,205	1,293,629	85.17%	216,658	8,547
Communications	381,950	73,081	308,869	80.87%	71,690	1,391
<u>Library</u>						
Library	843,933	144,855	699,078	82.84%	156,521	(11,666)
Computer Learning Center	82,395	12,509	69,886	84.82%	11,714	795
Total--Library	926,328	157,364	768,964	83.01%	168,235	(10,871)
Debt Service	1,032,493	247,897	784,596	75.99%	250,003	(2,106)
Non-Departmental	1,848,626	424,288	1,424,338	77.05%	146,197	278,091
Capital Outlay	1,311,225	60,382	1,250,843	95.39%	69,021	(8,639)
Total	19,692,559	3,590,352	16,102,207	81.77%	3,287,780	302,572

**CITY MANAGER'S
QUARTERLY UPDATE
JULY 1, 2007 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2007**

Outreach/Networking by City Manager

- Participated in the Independence Day Celebration Parade.
- Attended the July meeting of the Prince George's County City Manager/Administration group.
- Met with the Chair of the Montgomery College Neighborhood Advisory Committee to discuss the group's activities and related staff support needs.
- Attended National Night Out Against Crime activities on August 7th. Visited all three locations at which events were held.
- Began service on the Communications Committee of the Maryland Municipal League.
- Met with the City Managers of Gaithersburg and Rockville to discuss issues of common interest and concern.
- Began service on the Sustainability Advisory Committee of the International City/County Management Association.
- Met with the Chair of the Public Safety Citizens Advisory Committee to discuss the group's activities.

Administration

- Considerable staff time was devoted to the Takoma Metro development issue. Community and Government Liaison Suzanne Ludlow worked with the City Attorney's Office on preparing a response to the WMATA staff report on the Compact Hearing. A draft resolution was submitted to the City Council for its consideration; the resolution was the subject of a public hearing on September 24th.
- A Request for Proposal for interior building signage was issued. A contract was awarded by the City Council in September.
- City Manager Barb Matthews spent considerable time on tax duplication matters, including attendance at related task force and task force subcommittee meetings.
- Community and Government Liaison Suzanne Ludlow prepared a resolution for appreciation, thanking the District 20 representatives for their work in the 2007 legislative session. She also prepared testimony for the September 11th public hearing on County budget priorities and drafted proposed State legislative priorities for the Council's consideration. Resolutions regarding the tenth anniversary of Unification, the ICC, and the closing of the Piney Branch Elementary School pool were also prepared.
- On September 27th, City staff completed training on the use of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs). Approximately 80 employees participated in the training program offered by the American Red Cross. An AED will be installed on each floor of the Takoma Park Community Center, in the main office of the Public Works Facility, and at the New Hampshire Avenue

Recreation Center. The City also plans to purchase five alarmed wall cabinets to ensure the safety of the equipment and to reduce the probability of theft.

- During the quarter, a survey was sent to 3,000 City residents, asking for their opinion about how things are going in the community and about its future. The National Research Center, the firm retained by the City to conduct the survey, is scheduled to provide a report to the City by the end of the year.
- The primary focus of the City Clerk's Office entailed planning and preparation for the upcoming municipal election, which will be held on November 6th. Numerous meetings were held with the City's Board of Elections, as well as the Montgomery County Board of Elections.
- On September 5th, City Manager Barbara Matthews, Community and Government Liaison Suzanne Ludlow, and Management Assistant Venita George met with representatives of the Maryland Health Care Commission to discuss the Certificate of Need process.
- During the quarter, the Information Systems staff was heavily involved in bring the new County Computer Aided Dispatch system online for the Police Department. Associated tasks included the rewiring of the Communications Office and the installation of network drops for the new computers and printers.
- The annual audit of the City's general purpose financial statements got underway. Clifton Gunderson, LLP conducted its fieldwork during the month of September.
- Management Assistant Venita George provided staff assistance to the Health Services Impact Committee.

Communications

- Events covered by City TV during the quarter included the Independence Day Parade, the YES League Basketball championship games, and the Takoma Park Folk Festival. The Montgomery County Mobile Production Vehicle was used at each of these events, greatly enhancing the technical quality of the footage in addition to increasing operational efficiencies, especially at the daylong events. In addition, the Anycast purchased last year was used at secondary stages to improve production greatly over the one-camera shoot.
- Snapshots segments during the quarter included the following: "Community Oriented Policing: On The Beat" and "Community Oriented Policing: Watch Out!" Other Snapshot segments featured the Crossroads Farmers Market, the Takoma-Silver Spring Thunderbolts, highlights of the Jazz Fest, National Night Out events, the tenth anniversary of Unification, and the YES League Basketball championships. "Inspired Results" showcased the art and poetry exhibit at the Community Center/Sam Abbott Citizens' Center while "Happy Campers" highlighted the positive effect that the City's summer camp program has had on community youth. City TV staff, in collaboration with Housing and Community Development staff and Producer Paula Rehr, produced the special feature called "Tour The World at Takoma Park: Bon Appetit," showcasing several of the wonderful restaurant choices in the Crossroads and New Hampshire Avenue Corridor areas; this segment was cablecast as part of Snapshots in September and will be distributed on its own over the next few months.
- New programming released during the quarter included the following: Jazz Fest performances, Tap Dancing with Baakari Wilder, Mike Nicholas, Chris Ullman, Chuck Redd and Perffessor; the Oscillators and Jazz Jam Session; Jazz Band Brawl performances from Sweet Thunder Trio and

the Minor Thoughts Quintet; Tastes of Takoma performances from Shapiro and the AcroAirs; and the Independence Day Parade.

- In the continued quest towards implementing digital technology for its enhanced quality and reliability, new purchases for City TV this quarter included equipment allowing video to be recorded directly to external hard drives, as opposed to tape. This maintains the digital quality of the footage and greatly improves workflow by allowing editors to just plug the external drive directly into the editing computer. This completely eliminates a lengthy step of uploading from an analog tape to an editing computer. City TV has also purchased a new non-linear editing station, replacing one of two that are more than five years old. A portable unit has been ordered which will be used for editing and to assist with remote productions.
- City TV staff attended the Alliance for Community Media conference in Minneapolis, where they learned about updates in policy, technology, and innovative programming done by other jurisdictions and access centers.
- Live broadcasts included almost 30 hours of Council meetings, as well as the New Hampshire Avenue Design Charrette.
- City photographers have been immortalizing the presentation of Welcome Certificates to new businesses in the New Hampshire Avenue Corridor. Press conferences, festivals, City activities, and community celebrations have also been photographed.
- MTFA Architecture presented its report on the proposed renovation of the City Council Chambers/Auditorium on September 10th. Based on the Council's direction, the ad-hoc Auditorium Committee will continue to meet to further discuss the options developed by MTFA Architecture.
- Beginning in FY08, the City Newsletter editor will be working more closely with the management team to review and enhance each department's use of the Newsletter. During the quarter, Communications Office staff contacted postal service officials regarding the lax delivery of newsletters in the City's multiple-dwelling units; residents are supposed to receive a newsletter in each individual mailbox. Based on the feedback we have received, the situation appears to have improved.
- Usage of the City's website as a source of information about City activities and programs continues to grow. The average number of unique visitors per month to the web site during the quarter was 6,947; on average, each visitor viewed approximately four pages each visit.
- Strong utilization of Granicus, the web based video on demand service offered by the City, continued. The ten most viewed programs for the quarter are shown below:

Program	Requests
City Council Meeting - Tuesday, September 4, 2007	910
City Council Meeting - Monday, September 24, 2007	264
City Council Meeting - September 10, 2007	180
Snapshots: September 2007	179
City Council Meeting - Monday, September 17, 2007	132
Snapshots July/August 2007	110
City Council Meeting - Monday, July 30, 2007	68
Your Vote Counts	44
City Council Meeting - Monday, July 2, 2007	43
June 2007 Snapshots	40

Housing and Community Development

- The planning staff coordinated with the community and the Department of Public Works regarding the construction of a 600-foot long sidewalk connection between the Piney Branch Elementary, Takoma Park Middle School, and the Takoma Elementary on Grant Avenue.
- The Safe Routes to School Coordinator worked to develop partnerships within seven local elementary schools and PTAs, to create an outreach schedule for the school year, and to conduct the initial survey of parents and students.
- Departmental staff coordinated the development and design of interpretive signage for the Metropolitan Branch Trail and facilitated the selection of a contractor for the fabrication and installation of said signage along the trail.
- The planning division worked with the Public Works Department to develop a proposal to streamline the identification, evaluation, approval, funding, design, and construction for traffic calming and pedestrian safety projects.
- Departmental staff coordinated with the Metropolitan Regional Council of Governments in the development of a presentation intended to educate communities such as Takoma Park on density and the evaluation of smart growth development proposals in a local context.
- The planning division worked with Ride-On, Montgomery County, State Highway and Signal Outdoors to improve 14 bus stops on New Hampshire Avenue and two stops on Carroll Avenue to increase ADA and pedestrian access, safety, and comfort.
- Departmental staff conducted a census of Takoma Park businesses to determine the number of employees and square footage for each business.
- As part of an ongoing educational effort by the Safe Roadways Committee, the July newsletter included the article "Revolution in Cycling hits Takoma Park."
- The planning staff provided redevelopment and economic development assistance to small business owners, including one new yoga studio in Old Town. Assistance was also provided relative to the redesign of an existing building in Long Branch/Flower Village.
- Housing and Community Development Director Sara Daines coordinated the recruitment, selection, and appointment of the new Poet Laureate and Exhibit Director for the Arts and Humanities Commission.
- Departmental staff facilitated the promotion, review, and development of recommendations for the PY34 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.
- One hundred and thirteen (113) existing rental housing licenses were renewed; of these, 78 represented annual licenses, and 35 were biennial licenses. Eight units were discontinued as rental units, comprised of three single-family houses, two units of a four-unit facility, and three units of a four-unit facility. Eight new rental licenses were issued; all of these were one-unit rental facilities.
- Ninety-nine (99) violation notices were issued to landlords for failure to comply with the City's rental housing licensing requirements. Many of the violations pertained to a failure to obtain the required landlord certification and the failure to comply with State lead risk reduction program requirements.

- The target area inspection program continued, with a particular focus on the main entrance thoroughfares into the City. There were 37 residential property cases and four commercial site cases opened as a result of the Code Enforcement Division's proactive code enforcement efforts.
- An additional 38 residential nuisance complaint cases were investigated. Of the total 79 cases (target and complaint cases) currently under investigation, 40 were issued violation notices, and 16 were issued municipal citation infractions.
- Seven municipal citation infractions were forwarded to the City Attorney's Office for prosecution, with court dates set for October. Three cases were brought to trial in District Court, with abatement orders issued by the judge for all three properties. Two of the cases involved single-family houses that were condemned by staff. The third involved an illegal rental.
- The Affordable Housing Division was actively involved in the planning of the Montgomery County Housing Fair held on September 15th. The event, which was attended by departmental staff, was a huge success with over 1,000 people attending. The Fair is held each year at Bohrer Park in Gaithersburg.
- Hoping to increase residents' awareness of the services provided by the City, the Landlord Tenant Affairs staff attended a number of community events during the quarter, including National Night Out, the Crossroads Farmers Market, and the Culture Fair hosted by the Community Action Group. The new Landlord-Tenant Handbook, which has been published in English and Spanish, was distributed.
- The first Tenant Rights Class was held on September 27th as part of the department's increased focus on education and community outreach. Thirteen (13) tenants from a variety of rental properties were in attendance. Additional classes are scheduled.
- Departmental staff and community organizers with the Capacity Building Program worked with tenants who were interested in forming a Legislative Committee. The Committee has become active in the support of two State legislative bills that would give Montgomery County tenants more rights in regard to condominium conversions and no cause notices to vacate. Tenants gave testimony before the Takoma Park City Council and will appear before the County Council on October 11th.
- The Office of Landlord-Tenant Affairs had 734 customer contacts (telephone calls and walk-ins) during the quarter, with a monthly average of 245.

Library

- The Library's Harry Potter gala, held on July 30th, attracted an estimated 90 enthusiastic participants of all ages. Some came in costume, and all enjoyed a magic show, games, potions, snacks, and special effects. Participants competed for copies of the final book in the series and CDs. Children's Librarian Karen MacPherson planned the event in conjunction with Raphael Grimes, with support from his mother Franca Brilliant. Special thanks to them, and also to magician extraordinaire Lew Morris, Kinetic Artistry, who provided special effects, and the Friends of the Library, who donated the books and CD and contributed toward refreshments.
- Children's Librarian Karen MacPherson conducted three weekly programs for participants in the Recreation Department's Summer Camp over a six-week period. The programs were held at both the Library and the New Hampshire Recreation Center. The children and staff at the New Hampshire Center held a "thank you" party for Ms. MacPherson on August 1st.

- Introductory computer classes conducted in Spanish began in September at the Computer Learning Center. Held on Sunday afternoons, these drop-in classes are for adults and are offered free of charge. Spanish language announcements regarding the classes have been circulated throughout the community. Interested persons may contact Instructional Assistant Moises Blanco at the Computer Center on Saturdays or Sundays.
- Spanish language programs for preschoolers resumed in September and will be held on Thursday at 10 a.m. throughout the school year. Featuring storytelling and games with Lupe Marks, these programs are supported by the Friends of the Library.
- The annual Mike Morrissey charity golf tournament was held on September 17th in Rockville. Library staffers Nic Fontem, Gene Miller, and Dave Burbank played under the sponsorship of the Friends of the Library, joined by Board member Josh Wright. Ellen Robbins and Dave attended the celebration and auction afterwards, and learned that funds raised for the Library are expected to rival last year's total.
- For suggestions on good books to read, check out the Library books blog on its website. You can also find links to a Children's Room Blog of upcoming events and a Teen Books Buzz Blog by going to www.cityoftakomapark.org/library/.

Police

- Chief Ricucci announced that overall crime in the City of Takoma Park declined 9.15 percent in the first six months of 2007. Robberies decreased by 31 percent while burglaries decreased by 17.1 percent. Notable declines also occurred in the number of larcenies and auto thefts—five and seven percent, respectively. Residential burglaries were down by 23.9 percent compared to the same period in 2006. In part, Chief Ricucci attributed the decline in overall crime to a number of factors, including the establishment of the plainclothes unit, the level of cooperation between the Patrol Division and the Criminal Investigations Division to increase visibility, and the reinstitution of bike patrols.
- In August, the Police Department instituted a new program targeted at the business community. Officers leave business cards with a message from the Chief, advising the owner/operator that the business was checked the prior night by a named officer and was safe and secure. The card also reminds merchants to have an updated emergency notification list on file with the Police Department. The new program is part of the department's community policing outreach efforts.
- Chief Ricucci met with Officers Eric Tehrani and Laurie Reyes of the Montgomery County Police Department regarding Project Lifesaver. Project Lifesaver is a proactive response by the County to identify those individuals within the community who have a propensity to wander and are unable to return home. This program has been implemented in 554 jurisdictions in 41 states across the country. There have been over 1,500 searches, taking on average of 22 minutes, with all persons found. The department is exploring the possibility of implementing this program in the City of Takoma Park.
- During the quarter, ACS Government Solutions conducted speed studies throughout the City as part of the City's exploration of the installation of speed cameras. We are awaiting a final report to determine how to proceed.
- Administrative Services Division continues to work with the Montgomery County Police Alarm Reduction Unit to inform residents and business owners/operators of the new alarm law. The law will be enforced beginning January 1, 2008.

- On August 7th, departmental staff participated in National Night Out events at three locations: the VFW at 4th and Orchard Avenues, the Toys R Us site at University and New Hampshire Avenues in conjunction with Prince George's County, and 7777 Maple Avenue.
- Leo Mangum joined the department as Evidence/Property Clerk. Roberto Rojas, who previously worked as a part-time parking attendant, assumed the position of Nuisance/Parking Control Officer. The applicant pool for the Crime Analyst position was narrowed to two finalists.
- The department continues its modernization of the communications center. All officers now have new mobile computers in their cars, which allow them to do their reports, run wanted checks, and conduct business via e-mail. We are in the process of becoming paperless. The department's Records Management System partnership with Montgomery County continues to progress.
- Officers conducted 947 traffic stops, which resulted in citations, 37 impounds, four arrests, three DUI arrests, one recovered stolen gun, and two recovered property.
- On August 1st, Chief Ricucci and staff observed and participated in the training entitled "School Active Shooter Exercise 2007" at Clarksburg High School in Clarksburg, Maryland.
- Chief Ricucci attended the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) National Violent Crime Summit in Chicago in late September. He met with police chiefs and political leaders to discuss crime rates and trends in the United States.
- The quarter was a busy one for the CSAFE staff. Activities included the following:
 - On July 11th, CSAFE facilitated a community meeting with Hampshire Towers residents. Six residents attended the meeting, along with representatives from the City of Takoma Park Tenant-Landlord Affairs Office, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning, the Takoma Park Police Department, Impact Silver Spring, the Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office, and the Silver Spring Regional Center. Residents had the opportunity to discuss community concerns and meet representatives from the various County and City agencies.
 - On July 19th, a Weed and Seed meeting was held with residents of Langley Park to explain the program to the community and to give them the opportunity to provide input on Weed and Seed strategies. Approximately 15 residents attended. Major Kevin Davis, District 1, Prince George's County Police Department and Mary Kendall, CSAFE Program Director, facilitate the meeting. Representatives from the Prince George's County Executive Office, Congressman Van Hollen's Office, Community Legal Services, Arch Diocese of Washington, Action Langley Park, Maryland Multicultural Youth Center, Division of Parole and Probation and CASA de Maryland were in attendance.
 - On July 26th and August 23rd, CSAFE Outreach Coordinator Gretchen Hilburger facilitated community meetings at Hillwood Manor Apartments on July 26th. At the meeting, area residents discussed activities that they would like to coordinate to build a more cohesive and connected community. Those in attendance decided that they would like to hold a yard sale and a community clean-up day. They also plan to form a Neighborhood Watch. Detective Poole and Officer Barber attended the August meeting and addressed residents' concerns about thefts from autos and vehicle thefts.
 - The Maryland International Corridor CSAFE Oversight Committee met in late August to discuss programming and strategies. Chief Ricucci facilitated the meeting. Representatives from the Prince George's County Police Department, the Montgomery County Police Department, and other governmental agencies were in attendance.

- The Montgomery County Collaborative Supervision and Focused Enforcement Violence Reduction Initiative Strategic Planning Committee met in mid-September. Acting Lieutenant Tyrone Collington and CSAFE Program Director Mary Kendall attended.

Public Works

- Departmental staff provided logistical support for the Independence Day parade and fireworks, the Folk Festival, and the Touch-A-Truck event. Over 100 hours of overtime was worked in providing support for these events.
- A contract was awarded to Highway and Safety Services for the stream bank stabilization project along Mississippi Avenue and Comstock Branch of Sligo Creek. Work began in September.
- Repairs to the Maple Avenue pedestrian bridge commenced. The work is being performed by Highway and Safety Services.
- Departmental staff participated in the planning and coordination of the Grant Avenue sidewalk construction, which is being funded through the Safe Routes to School grant.
- The final planning meeting regarding the design for the Jackson Boyd playground renovation was held on September 6th.
- Work on the Spring Park project continued. The walkway was completed, and additional plantings were installed.
- A stormwater retention project at the corner of Grant Avenue and Holly Avenue got underway. It is scheduled to be completed in October
- The green space triangle at Grant and Darwin Avenue was expanded to narrow the intersection and improve pedestrian safety in the area.
- Speed humps were replaced in the following locations: Park Avenue, Heather Avenue, the 7400 block of Flower Avenue, and Jackson Avenue.
- The following streets were resurfaced during the quarter: Heather Avenue; Jackson Avenue, from Flower to Garland; Davis Avenue; and Glenside Avenue, from New Hampshire to Wildwood Avenue.
- Crosswalk ramps and crosswalks were installed at Elm Avenue and Hickory Avenue.
- Public Works Director Daryl Braithwaite attended a three-day training class in incident management and unified command.
- Three departmental employees received training in CPR and the use of an Automated External Defibrillator.
- The following permits were issued during the quarter:
 - Dumpster in Right-of-Way = 5
 - Tree Removal Permit = 14
 - Tree Protection Permit = 16
 - Utility Work in the Right-of-Way = 17

- Departmental staff coordinated the City's first group tree purchase. Residents purchased 30 shade and overstory trees through the program for planting on private property.

Recreation

- The Brickman Group initiated intensive field improvement measures at Lee Jordan Field. Fifty (50) cubic yards of topsoil was added to fill in low spots on the field. The entire area was aerated, seeded, and is being irrigated every night. The Ed Wilhelm Field was also seeded and aerated and is receiving irrigation nightly. The drought has created a challenge to our efforts to grow grass but improvement is expected throughout the fall. Both fields have been placed on a regular aeration and seeding schedule through November, which will be continued in the spring.
- The Extreme Horizons teen camp was able to offer a varied set of experiences for our City's youth. For the first time ever, the Extreme Horizons camp had a waiting list throughout the camp's duration. Teens that participated were ages 10-13. This summer's activities and trips included horseback riding, caving, outdoor and indoor rock climbing, museums, Folk Life Festival, and visits to amusement parks. Many teens already started to plan where they would like to go for next year's Extreme Horizon Camp.
- The Takoma Park Recreation Center and the Takoma Park Community Center hosted an average of 53 campers per week through the Creative Adventures and Recess Summer Camps. The campers went on some exciting trips, including the Maryland Science Center, Cameron Run Water Park, a mini-opera at Wolf Trap, and NASA Goddard to learn about the space program.
- Efforts to forge partnerships with other agencies and groups continued during the quarter. Discussions took place with the Assistant Principal of Takoma Park Middle School, the Facility Director of Long Branch Community Center, and Liz Lerman Dance Studio. Departmental staff also provided a tour of the Community Center to Montgomery County's Recreation Director and his staff and participated in a Youth Summit held by County Executive Ike Leggett.
- Recreation Director Debra Haiduven attended the monthly meeting of the Victory Towers Residents Council to solicit ideas and get feedback on the City's senior programming.
- Departmental staff participated in a Teen Forum at the Takoma Park Recreation Center. The staff invited program specialists from Arlington County and Prince George's County to present their strategies for successful teen programs in their communities. The staff brainstormed and mapped out a vision and plan for the next year in Takoma Park. The goal is to dramatically increase the level of participation and quality of programs for our youth.
- This fall, the department started offering its own guided outdoor adventure programs. A trip to Harper's Ferry included a hike and tour of the historical site. A rock climbing trip to Great Falls National Park in Virginia focused on climbing safety and technique. In addition to these trips, the department is hosting a national certification course in Wilderness First Aid, which prepares outdoor enthusiasts and leaders for back country emergencies. The class, which is filled to capacity, runs Monday nights through November 12th.

COUNCIL PRIORITY: AFFORDABLE HOUSING
UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES – July 1, 2007 THROUGH September 30, 2007

Tenant Capacity Building Initiative

- Assistance was provided to the Park Ritchie Tenant Association in obtaining pro bono legal representation for its COLTA hardship rent increase hearing. The hearing was scheduled upon receipt of an objection filed by the owner - Southern Management – contesting the preliminary rent increase decision issued by COLTA's rents analyst. The decision was upheld by COLTA. The ruling has been appealed to the Circuit Court.
- Staff assisted the Hilltop Tenants Association, which is seeking to acquire 7716-7732 Maple Avenue, in the selection of a developer. The association elected to work with Frontier Financial, who will be working with the tenants to convert the 20 unit rental facility into condominiums.
- Assistance was provided to new and existing tenant associations, including the tenants at 7520 Maple Avenue as they attempt to form a tenants association. Staff also met with the tenants at 641 Houston Avenue to discuss the establishment of new leadership and to address concerns raised by the tenants regarding newly established income certification requirements instituted by the landlord, Montgomery Housing Partnership.
- Program staff participated in 13 meetings with different tenant groups and returned 180 phone calls to tenants, lawyers, and neighborhood residents and 50 e-mails relating to the City's capacity building efforts.

Education and Outreach

- Departmental staff served on the planning committee and participated in the Montgomery County Housing Fair held on September 15th. The event was a huge success with over 1,000 people attending. The Fair is held each year at Bohrer Park in Gaithersburg.
- Landlord Tenant Affairs representatives, in the interests of increasing resident awareness of the services offered by the Department, participated in a number of community events this quarter: National Night Out, the Crossroads Farmers Market, and the Culture Fair hosted by the Community Action Group. Materials distributed at these events included the new Landlord-Tenant Handbook, which has been published in English and Spanish.
- The first Tenant Rights Class was held on September 27th as part of the Division's increased focus on education and community outreach. Thirteen (13) tenants from a variety of rental properties were in attendance. Participants were encouraged to participate in one of three committees formed by the tenant association representatives - Rent Stabilization, Legislative Initiatives, and Maintenance and Safety Issues. Additional classes are scheduled.

Rent Stabilization

- Capacity Building organizers met with members of the tenant's Rent Stabilization committee to help them prepare for the Council's July 16th public hearing on proposed amendments to the City Code.
- The first Council reading of Ordinance 2007-40, amending *City Code Chapter 6.20 Rent Stabilization*, was held on July 23rd. The amendment was approved at the second reading on July 30th and will go into effect on December 1, 2007.
- Regulations detailing the administrative aspects of the amended Code are under development.
- Six landlords were asked to submit utility bills as part of a larger study of the impact of

energy cost increases on the operating costs of local landlords. The information gathered during this process will be used to determine the appropriateness of a utility surcharge, considered by the Council during its review of rent stabilization.

- Rent Stabilization reports were sent to all landlords subject to the law in August, with a return due date of September 30th.
- A correction notice was mailed to landlords and published in the Takoma Park Newsletter, stating that the 2007-2008 rent stabilization allowance had been miscalculated. The corrected allowance - 2.5% - is effective from July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008 and can be retroactively applied.

Landlord Certification Program

- Staff continues to proactively market the program to local real estate brokers, agents, and prospective landlords unfamiliar with local rental housing laws.
- Seventy-one landlords/agents (71) were certified, with 64 attending one of three 90-minute certification seminars offered this quarter and seven successfully completing the alternative written exam.

Housing Tax Credit Program

- Promotional efforts regarding the Housing Tax Credit Program continued with information on the program and the filing deadline for eligible homeowners announced in the Takoma Park Newsletter. The deadline has been extended to October 31st.

City Website

- The Landlord-Tenant Affairs section of the website was further refined, with information presented in a format similar to that of the Landlord Tenant Handbook. Proposed changes are to be implemented in fall 2007.

Vacant Abandoned and Neglected Property Initiative

- Work on the exterior property survey, developed in support of the Vacant Abandoned and Neglected Property Initiative progressed with the hiring of a part-time intern over the summer months. To date, a total of 2600 properties have been surveyed. Survey results are being entered into a database to allow for easy access to the collected information.

Land Trust

- No new activity to report.

Lobbying and Outreach Activity

- The Legislative Committee, comprised of local tenants, met twice with Suzanne Ludlow and the Capacity Building organizers to develop a strategy to gain support of two proposed state bills focusing on tenant rights. One of the proposed bills deals with tenant rights when a rental property is being converted to a condominium; the other pertains to circumstances when a tenant receives a no cause notice to vacate.
- Members of the Legislative Committee spoke at the public comment period at the Takoma Park Council Meeting on September 24th in support of the two bills.

COUNCIL PRIORITY: NEW HAMPSHIRE AVENUE CORRIDOR
UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES - JULY 1, 2007 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2007

Redevelopment – New Hampshire Avenue

- The planning staff coordinated the New Hampshire Avenue Design Charrette. The charrette, held in August, included four public meetings and five stakeholder meetings. The final concept plan and corresponding action plan, intended to promote new development between Sligo Creek Parkway and Eastern Avenue, will be published later this fall.
- The Charrette Concept was presented to the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Pedestrian Safety Committee, State Highway Design Division, and the Takoma/Langley Sector Plan Team. An invitation to host an open house to discuss the concept plan was extended to neighborhood organizations and other interested groups.
- A Community Legacy application for funding of a New Hampshire Avenue Placemaking and Streetscape Improvements Project was submitted to the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development.
- A presentation on beautification and crime prevention through environmental design was made to the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Development Authority Board.
- In partnership with Montgomery County and Prince George's County Planning Departments, staff coordinated the completion of a pre-plan pedestrian study, a kick-off meeting with the consultant, and the development of an outreach plan in preparation for the upcoming Takoma/Langley Sector Plan.

Code Enforcement

- The focus of the Target Area Inspection program was directed towards the City's primary gateways in September. A total of 37 residential property cases and 4 commercial site cases were opened as a result of the Divisions' proactive code enforcement efforts.
- Efforts to address the property maintenance concerns identified at 6530 New Hampshire Avenue – condemned earlier this year – progressed with the case forwarded to the City Attorney's office. The case is scheduled to be heard in District Court on October 16th.

Business Association

- One-on-one visits to 12 restaurants and Spanish speaking business owners located within the corridor were conducted in partnership with Montgomery County's Department of Economic Development's Small Business Division.

Lobbying and Outreach Activity

- Federal, State and County representatives were provided an opportunity to participate in August's Design Charrette. Attending the stakeholder meeting and/or the final public presentation were representatives from Senator Cardin's office, the State of Maryland Senate and House of Delegates, and Montgomery County and Prince George's County Council.
- A luncheon and tour of the corridor was held for property owners on Tuesday, July 10th. Participating property owners were provided information on the City's visions for the New Hampshire Avenue Corridor and introduced to representatives from the participating planning offices. Opportunities for collaboration were discussed.
- A second tour of the New Hampshire Avenue Corridor was held on Thursday, July 19th. Targeted to regional and national developers and financiers, the tour was designed to introduce participants to the commercial and residential development opportunities available

along the corridor.

Façade and Site Improvement Program

- The marketing of the Façade Improvement Program began with available financing opportunities presented to targeted businesses and property owners.
- Discussions with area architects were initiated in an effort to secure design advice for participating businesses.

Gateway Signage System

- The Planning Division facilitated the solicitation, review, and award of a contract for the fabrication and installation of the first stage of the Gateway and Wayfinding signage system. A total of 54 signs will be installed, with a majority located along the corridor.

Marketing

- Copies of the 2007 edition of “Eat Takoma” and “Tour The World at Takoma Park: Bon Appetit” were distributed to area food reviewers and writers.

Business Watch Program

- Progress was made in the establishment of a Business Watch Program for the New Hampshire Avenue corridor. The program is being promoted in partnership with CSAFE staff.

COUNCIL PRIORITY: COMMUNITY CENTER
UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES – JULY 1, 2007 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2007

Resolve Outstanding Issues Related to Phase One and Phase Two Construction

- Staff continued its efforts to resolve outstanding punch list and other items of concern. Detailed documentation of these efforts is being maintained.

Auditorium Renovation

- MTFA Architecture presented its report on the proposed renovation of the City Council Chambers/Auditorium on September 10th. Based on the Council's direction, the ad-hoc Auditorium Committee will continue to meet to further discuss the options developed by MTFA Architecture.

Gym

- Questions regarding the proposed construction of a gymnasium were included in the residents' survey conducted during the quarter.

Signage

- A Request for Proposal for interior building signage was issued. A contract was awarded by the City Council in September.

COUNCIL PRIORITY: TAX DUPLICATION
UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES – JULY 1, 2007 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2007

- The City Manager attended meetings of the joint County/Municipal Task Force on Revenue Sharing and the Road Maintenance Subcommittee. As part of her work on the Task Force, she also discussed service delivery issues with various staff members of the City and County. The City Manager is one of six municipal representatives on the Task Force.

COUNCIL PRIORITY: DEVELOPMENT
UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES – JULY 1, 2007 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2007

Master Plan/Development Goals

- A Community Legacy application for funding of a Neighborhood Commercial Areas Improvements Project was submitted to the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. The application included projects submitted by Main Street Takoma and Historic Takoma, Inc.

Planning Projects

- The planning staff coordinated City level review of a proposed development at the corner of Laurel Avenue and provided comments to the Planning Board.
- The Planning Division finalized acceptance of EZ Storage improvements to the right-of-way.

Takoma Metro Site

- Considerable staff time was devoted to the Takoma Metro development issue. Community and Government Liaison Suzanne Ludlow worked with the City Attorney's Office on preparing a response to the WMATA staff report on the Compact Hearing. A draft resolution was submitted to the City Council for its consideration; the resolution was the subject of a public hearing on September 24th.

Washington Adventist Hospital

- The Health Services Impact Committee met two times during the quarter. Committee members agreed to collect additional information from the staff of Washington Adventist Hospital. One Committee member met with County Councilmember George Leventhal, Health and Human Service Chairman, to discuss the proposed County Health Survey. Other members discussed health needs with representatives from various neighborhood organizations. The Committee is preparing a draft Request for Proposal that concentrates on gathering data from specific focus groups in the City.